

Message Text

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15

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2450

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: ELECTORAL ROUNDUP

1. AFM REPS SUGGEST POLITICALLY UNINFORMED CAST UNMARKED

BALLOTS:

ON MARCH 25 LT. RAMIRO CORREIA, REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBER
AND LEADER OF THE AFM CULTURAL DYNAMIZATION CAMPAIGN, STATED
IN A LISBON DYNAMIZATION SESSION THAT PERSONS WHO DO NOT
KNOW FOR WHICH PARTY THEY SHOULD VOTE MIGHT BEST CAST UNMARKED
BALLOTS ON ELECTION DAY. ACCORDING TO LT. CORREIA, CASTING
OF BLANK BALLOTS WOULD ENABLE THE AFM TO KNOW THE PERCENTAGE
OF THE POPULATION "WHICH IS NOT IN GOOD CONSCIOUSNESS ABLE TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS." THIS THEME HAS BEEN REITERATED

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SUBSEQUENTLY IN OTHER AFM SESSIONS. THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL

COMMISSION (NEC) IN AN APRIL 9 EXTRAORDINARY SESSION, GAVE ITS LEGAL OPINION ON THE RIGHT OF AFM REPRESENTATIVES TO URGE POLITICALLY IGNORANT PERSONS TO CAST BLANK BALLOTS. NOTING THAT THE ELECTORAL LAWS ARE SILENT ON THE TOPIC, THE NEC NEVERTHELESS STATED THAT THE AFM MAY SUGGEST THAT PEOPLE CAST UNMARKED BALLOTS ON ELECTION DAY. "A BLANK VOTE SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH ABSTENTION," WHICH IS ILLEGAL TO ADVOCATE. (COMMENT: THE POLITICAL POLLS SHOW THAT MANY PERSONS STILL DO NOT KNOW THE NAME OF ANY POLITICAL PARTY OR KNOW FOR WHICH PARTY THEY WILL VOTE.)

2. DISTRIBUTION OF BALLOTS BEGINS:

MILITARY AUTHORITIES ARE COOPERATING IN DISTRIBUTION OF 8.443 MILLION BALLOTS TO THE AUTHORITIES IN THE 304 MUNICIPALITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. ON APRIL 22 THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES WILL DISTRIBUTE THE BALLOTS AMONG THE 14,000 POLLING PLACES. THE BALLOTS CONTAIN THE NAMES AND SYMBOLS OF THE PARTIES RUNNING IN EACH DISTRICT. THE ORDER IN WHICH THE PARTIES APPEAR ON THE BALLOT VARIES BY DISTRICT IN ACCORDANCE WITH DRAWINGS HELD PREVIOUSLY.

3. ELECTION CENTER ESTABLISHED:

FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF THE NUMEROUS FOREIGN JOURNALISTS EXPECTED TO BE IN THE COUNTRY TO COVER THE ELECTIONS, THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS HAS SET UP AN ELECTORAL INFORMATION CENTER ON THE PREMISES OF THE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION IN LISBON. INFORMATION ABOUT THE ELECTIONS IS AVAILABLE TO JOURNALISTS AT CENTER OFFICES IN AUDITORIUM TWO OF THE FOUNDATION. THE CENTER WILL MAKE AVAILABLE TO JOURNALISTS 30 TELEX TAPE PUNCH MACHINES AND 33 TELETYPES, AS WELL AS NECESSARY PHONES, TYPEWRITERS, ETC. AIRLINE REPS WILL ALSO BE ON HAND TO HANDLE FILM SHIPMENTS. ON ELECTION EVE, AFTER THE POLLS CLOSE AT 1900 LOCAL, THE CENTER WILL BECOME THE SITE FOR COMPILATION OF THE PRELIMINARY VOTE TALLY. RUNNING TOTALS WILL BE COMPILED BY COMPUTER EVERY HALF-HOUR ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION TELE-TYPED IN BY THE 22 CIVIL GOVERNORS. THE OFFICIAL ELECTION RESULTS WILL ONLY BE PUBLISHED FOUR DAYS AFTER THE POLLS CLOSE.

4. CAMPAIGN CONTINUES WITHOUT SERIOUS INCIDENTS:

THE FIRST ONE-THIRD OF THE OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN PERIOD HAS PASSED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITHOUT SERIOUS INCIDENTS SO FAR. ALTHOUGH MINOR HARASSMENT OF THE PPD AND SOCIALIST RALLIES HAS OCCURRED IN VARIOUS PLACES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, NOTHING UNUSUALLY VIOLENT FOR PRESENT DAY PORTUGAL HAS TAKEN PLACE. THE MES AND THE OTHER FAR-LEFT GROUPS HAVE KEPT UP THEIR HARANGUES AGAINST THE MODERATE PARTIES AND HAVE CONTINUED TO DOWNPLAY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ELECTIONS, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE PARTICIPATING IN THEM. THE CDS, WHICH HAS DECIDED TO KEEP ITS PROPAGANDA LARGELY CONFINED

TO THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA, HELD ITS FIRST RALLY WITHOUT INCIDENT--
OR ADVANCE PUBLICITY--APRIL 8 IN AVEIRO. THE PARTY HAS MANAGED
TO FIND THE CASH TO PAY FOR 200,000 POSTERS HELD SINCE LAST
NOVEMBER BY A LOCAL PRINTER, AND THESE, THE FIRST NEW CDS
POSTERS IN MONTHS, ARE NOW BEGINNING TO APPEAR AROUND THE
COUNTRY. THE CDS, REPRESENTED ON TV APRIL 8 BY GEN. GALVAO
DE MELO, IS MAKING GOOD USE OF ITS ALLOTTED TV TIME TO APPEAL
TO WOMEN, THE ELDERLY, AND OTHER LIKELY CONSTITUENTS. THE
ONLY OTHER NEW ELEMENT IN RECENT DAYS IS A STEP UP IN PCP
ATTACKS ON MARIO SOARES PERSONALLY.
CARLUCCI

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